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# Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

*Provisional*

**4826**th meeting

Tuesday, 16 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

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| *President:* | Sir Emyr Jones Parry | (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) |
| *Members:* | Angola | Mr. Gaspar Martins |
| | Bulgaria | Mr. Tafrov |
| | Cameroon | Mr. Tidjani |
| | Chile | Mr. Maquieira |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Yishan |
| | France | Mr. De La Sablière |
| | Germany | Mr. Pleuger |
| | Guinea | Mr. Sow |
| | Mexico | Mrs. Arce de Jeannet |
| | Pakistan | Mr. Mahmood |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Konuzin |
| | Spain | Ms. Menéndez |
| | Syrian Arab Republic | Mr. Mekdad |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

## Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia (S/2003/875)

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03-51382 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Liberia**

**Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia (S/2003/875)**

**The President**: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jacques Klein, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Klein to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Liberia in document S/2003/875.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jacques Klein, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia. I give him the floor.

**Mr. Klein** (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me today, in my capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Liberia, to submit to the Council the first report of the Secretary-General on Liberia.

At a time when the international community is closely considering the role played and results obtained by the United Nations in the resolution of conflicts around the world, it is my hope that the current situation in Liberia will continue to attract sustained international attention and commitment. It is in that spirit, and on the condition of approval by the members of this Council, that the recommendations contained in the report — with a particular view to establishing a United Nations mission in Liberia — were formulated.

(*spoke in English*)

Liberia's massive humanitarian and political crisis calls for immediate intervention. Thousands of its citizens do not have access to life's basic necessities of shelter, water, food or even rudimentary medical care. Their suffering echoes the words of the scriptures: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" For the past 12 years, they have lived in a hellish limbo, suffering at the whim of warlords and despots, exploited by a criminal kleptocracy without help or relief in sight. Their lives and their country are held hostage by armed drugged thugs who destroyed the State and engulfed the region in chaos. The ravages of self-centred political and criminal ideologies spread the conflict beyond Liberia's borders and caused enormous suffering and havoc in the neighbouring States.

It is hard to assess the psychological effects of these crimes against justice and humanity. The matter becomes more complex when we think of it as something which a nation has absorbed into its very being — a sort of virus which, through channels of circulation, has infected the entire body politic. The result: the fearful economic waste; the untimely death of no small part of the population; a measure of terror and pain that can only be partially conceived and estimated; and the collective national consciousness of having been witness to enormous crimes.

This is a fearful legacy to be left to future generations. Life becomes cheap; nothing is absolutely safe or sure; deeds of injustice and violence become common facts in daily life; and there is the ever-present fear of imminent war. Events, however revolting, are soon forgotten in our often tempo-centric world. Bernard Shaw wrote that the worst sin towards our fellow men is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. That is the essence of inhumanity.

The decent and good people of Liberia, and there are many of them, deserve better from us. Liberia was a founding Member of the United Nations. It played a key and critical role in the fight against fascism. Roberts Field was built as an entrepôt for allied aircraft transiting to Europe. Liberia also produced the majority of the free world's rubber supplies that ensured allied victory after the plantations of South-East Asia were overrun. Time and again, when Liberia was called upon for help or assistance, it gave. Does it deserve no less now that it needs our help?

Today Liberia is not even listed on the United Nations Development Programme human development index. Seventy-five per cent of its citizens are living below the poverty line; the unemployment rate is 85 per cent; the literacy rate is 38 per cent; 50 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age. Added to that is that 70 per cent of the belligerents are child soldiers, coerced, psychologically traumatized, manipulated and exploited by self-appointed military leaders. We have a phenomenon not known elsewhere in the world where the younger population is actually less well educated than their parents.

We have an obligation to assist in putting an end to that cycle of brutality, violence, corruption and instability, which has destroyed the social fabric of society, spilled over the borders of Liberia and profoundly affected the region as a whole. That effort will require dramatic, engaged and bold solutions. Liberia and the region need to be stabilized and brought into a larger African framework where it can be given the political support, the encouragement and the mentoring required to help it become a stable and self-sustaining member of Africa and the international community.

The first steps have already been taken. We need to pay a special tribute to the courage and diligence of President Obasanjo of Nigeria, Nigeria's Foreign Minister and General Abubakar and to the staff who supported the recent peace talks in Ghana. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has played the lead role in creating the conditions for peace in Liberia. Through concerted political action and the commitment of troops, ECOWAS has underscored its importance and its energy as the regional organization committed to ensuring peace, stability and development in West Africa.

To build on the efforts of ECOWAS, the international community must make a strong commitment now to Liberia, from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, to establishing a safe and secure environment for refugee return, addressing law and order issues, gender issues and seriously attacking cross-border criminal activities. Those efforts, if successful, will transform Liberia from a failed State at war with itself to a nation at peace.

Despite the multitude of challenges facing us, there is room for hope. Progress can be made, but it will be expensive, arduous and at times frustrating. At a time of many calls for the attention and resources of the international community, it is necessary to plan next steps not only in Liberia, but also in the context of the region on the basis of objective analysis.

We cannot be timid and handicap ourselves from the outset of this enterprise, as we did in Sierra Leone. The international community must be prepared to commit the resources and the personnel needed to help the people of Liberia rebuild their country. And while the international community must provide the resources, this must also be a partnership with the citizens of Liberia for they ultimately have the responsibility for ending the conflict and healing and rebuilding their nation.

An essential part of the healing and rebuilding process is the bringing to justice of those who have committed violations of international law. Without justice, there can be no healing. Without justice, those who believe that they can act with impunity will be tempted to do so again. Without justice, Liberia cannot bring this dark past to closure and look to a brighter future. Ultimately, if you do not punish the guilty, you cannot absolve the innocent.

Between 24 and 29 August, I met with Presidents of Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, the Prime Minister of Guinea, members of the diplomatic community, the Commander of the French forces in Côte d'Ivoire, the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and my colleagues in the United Nations missions in the field.

On 1 September, I met with President of Nigeria and the Foreign Minister. In my meetings all pledged their support and full cooperation with the United Nations Mission on Liberia (UNMIL) and stressed the need for regional cooperation. It is that cooperation that is crucial if United Nations efforts in Liberia and the region are to be successful.

I turn now to the task facing UNMIL. The Secretary-General's report, which is before you (S/2003/875), details key elements that are required if that mission is to achieve its mandate.

I must commend the rapid deployment of the ECOWAS Military Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) to Liberia, and take this opportunity to salute the troops from Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Benin and Togo in the highly visible and volatile

situation that they originally faced. Subsequent to the deployment of ECOMIL, with support from the offshore assets of the United States, stability has begun to be restored in and around Monrovia. Clearly, much more remains to be done.

The multinational force that is now in Liberia, with the Council's approval, will be replaced by a United Nations force on 1 October, if the Council approves the mandate. That United Nations force must be credible, well trained and well equipped. Its leadership must be focused, impartial, experienced and professional. Without those ingredients, the mission will be in jeopardy. Troops will be asked to carry out extremely difficult tasks — not only securing the capital and other major towns, but also ensuring that the combatants respect the Peace Agreement, monitoring the borders of the State, establishing cantonment sites for disarmament, overseeing demobilization and ensuring that a safe and secure environment is established for all members of the Liberian population. Therefore, well-led, trained and equipped forces can make the difference between success and failure, between peace and chaos.

One of the major challenges facing us will be the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all ex-combatants. United Nations experience in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique should serve as lessons learned. First, there cannot be disarmament and demobilization without integration, rehabilitation and re-insertion into society. Therefore, it must be stressed, adequate and secure financing for the programme is critical and must include the maintenance of cantonment sites, supporting ex-combatants and their families during the process and providing alternative means of vocational training, employment and education.

In that respect, particular attention must be focused on child ex-combatants who face greater difficulty in re-entering civil society and will require special assistance in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. That assistance will focus on family reunification, along with special medical, shelter, and educational and technical assistance, facilitated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other child protection agencies, until such time that they can be safely reintegrated into civil society. Female ex-combatants also face difficulties. They need to receive specialized medical treatment, shelter, education and retraining and counselling assistance. The medical rehabilitation of all ex-combatants will be required. Those with physical disabilities must be given high priority assistance.

It should also be noted that most of the ex-combatants have neither completed formal education, nor have they acquired the necessary technical skills to compete in the economic development of Liberia. Without the prospect of participating in the economic life of the country, most ex-combatants will revert to criminal activities to sustain a livelihood. It is crucial that programmes be created to ensure that these ex-combatants have a fair chance to secure employment or educational opportunities if they are to be peacefully reintegrated into Liberian society.

One of the yardsticks by which UNMIL's ultimate success will be measured is its contribution to reforming and restructuring the criminal justice system to better reflect the communities they serve and to provide confidence for returnees. I have placed a high priority on this process. In all of these endeavours our focus is to ensure that police performance meets international standards of policing and human rights. That requires co-location of civilian police officers with local police for the purpose of monitoring and mentoring. But the key to self-sustaining police reform is professional training. We will institute the essential programmes of human dignity and transitional courses and basic and specialized courses such as leadership, management, community policing, firearms and traffic training. Our aim will be to create an effective educational infrastructure within one year so that the local police can become self-sustaining in their training programmes, thus freeing up our resources for the more extensive programme of co-location.

We will also work to objectivity ensure that the judicial system, which has been rendered dysfunctional through political intimidation and lack of resources, is restructured. As I have often said, if police reform is not accompanied by judicial reform, it is like trying to clap with only one hand. That is a bitter lesson learned from my last two missions. Those entrusted with those programmes and the new judicial review process must be competent professionals who have the confidence and trust of the local judicial community. The overall management of judicial reform and review remains the responsibility of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, with assistance provided by expert

international organizations, under the lead of the United Nations through the expertise and resources of the United Nations Development Programme. Until citizens know and believe that the courts are truly independent bodies with enforceable decisions and with an effective police force trained to international standards of policing and human rights, only then can there be a guarantee of the rule of law.

UNMIL, in partnership with the national Government, will provide substantive assistance in areas related to the prison system and will centre its efforts on prison reform, training and the development of prison service personnel. That will naturally include monitoring functions to ensure international standards of human rights are protected and ingrained.

A team of correctional system experts will provide assistance, advice and mentoring support to regional institutional and headquarters prison personnel, including administration, human resources and financing and the Ministry of Justice. As with police reform, prison reform will entail co-location and monitoring in the prisons and headquarters with their national counterparts. Also necessary and key to the reform and development of the prison system will be the redevelopment of a national training capacity.

The reform of the criminal justice system will not come cheap. To accomplish those objectives funding of civil institutions is crucial. Therefore, should the Council approve this mandate, I propose to call a conference of potential donors and seek international assistance for the reform and development of civil institutions. Those activities will encompass tasks ranging from basic training for civil servants to the provision of essential equipment and infrastructure. I also intend to seek funding for the salaries of civil servants to bridge the interim period until the Liberian Government is able to collect revenue to support its activities. The prompt payment of salaries is a key element in building professionalism and discouraging public employees from seeking bribes to supplement their incomes.

I have witnessed first hand that Liberia's conflict has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, impacting not only on Liberians, but on refugees from Sierra Leone and the Côte d'Ivoire as well.

What I can also state is that emergency programmes are beginning to resurface to help alleviate this crisis. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/875) Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator and Humanitarian Envoy for the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, led the United Nations country team to Monrovia, and non-governmental organizations and the Red Cross are providing emergency interventions, particularly in the food, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and protection sectors. Those now engaged in those efforts include the World Food Programme and its partners, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and other health agencies. Naturally, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have restarted their programmes and are assisting refugees from Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire to return to their places of origin.

In addition, humanitarian agencies began relocating internally displaced persons in Monrovia to the camps in Montserrado County on 11 September. Several thousand internally displaced persons in temporary settlements will be assisted to return to their previous camps, where they will continue to receive assistance and protection. Priority is being given to internally displaced persons occupying school buildings in order to enable children to return to school by mid-October.

In the last few weeks the United Nations Special Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Ross Mountain, and I have engaged in negotiations with the authorities in the neighbouring countries, as well as the Liberian parties, to secure their cooperation in facilitating cross-border humanitarian operations to various parts of Liberia. On 12 September, a 15-member inter-agency team including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations undertook a three-day mission to Harper, on the southern border with Sierra Leone. The mission, which was undertaken by boat, has paved the way for re-establishing relief programmes in the area and for initiating cross-border activities, particularly for refugees on the Sierra Leone side of the border.

To ensure a coordinated and effective response to humanitarian assistance proper funding is critical. To date donors have been generous in providing start-up resources for life-saving activities, but more is still required to ensure sustainability in all those programmes. I am particularly pleased that a

consolidated inter-agency appeal for 2004 will be launched at the end of the year.

In sum, a well-planned, coordinated and funded humanitarian programme is a crucial requirement in order for sustained development and peace to flourish in Liberia and give its citizens hope for a productive future. The peace process deserves no less.

Allow me to address the issue of human rights. UNMIL, as an integrated mission, will encourage and coordinate international protection efforts and the promotion of human rights in Liberia. I will give priority to the improvement of the human rights situation and the protection of civilians, especially women and children. I assure the Council that human rights protection will include monitoring and public reporting on the current situation in this regard.

(*spoke in French*)

The future of Liberia and its people is currently in the hands of the members of the Council. The role and objectives that I have just presented for a United Nations mission to Liberia require the Council to make available the adequate resources and to express its ongoing support. If we want this mission to be successful, member States must demonstrate their will to give us the mandate and necessary resources to achieve our objectives. At the same time, the Liberian people must recognize and accept their primary responsibility in the development of their country. This operation must be a real partnership enabling Liberia to embark on the right path, never to allow its inhabitants to become the victims of warlords while preventing Liberian territory from being used as a safe haven by those seeking to destabilize the region.

(*spoke in English*)

The people of Liberia deserve better. The international community, in partnership with Liberia, must rise to the challenge. As my Alsatian countryman, Albert Schweitzer, wrote many years ago:

> "We are not free to choose whether we will or will not do the right thing in Africa; we owe it to them. The good that we do is not an act of charity. Indeed, after we have done everything there is in our power to do, we shall have repaid only a small part of the mistakes committed against them in the past."

In sum, we are putting together an outstanding group of United Nations staff members, international civil servants and a credible military force. If the Council gives us the mandate and the tools, I assure you we will do what is just and what is right.

**The President**: I thank Mr. Klein for that excellent briefing, which augments the report of the Secretary-General.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.*